**41. Economic Development Board.** This Board has been reconstituted with effect from the beginning of the current year, the number of members being reduced to the necessary minimum. The Board is now composed of 12 members, of whom 5 are officials and 7 non-officials, 4 of the latter being elected by the non-official members of the Legislative Council. The life of the present Board has been fixed at three years. So far, 10 ordinary and 2 special meetings of the Economic Development Board have been held and the suggestions offered by the Board at those meetings have been of great help to the Government in the disposal of several important questions affecting the welfare of the country. It has been decided to entrust the conduct of the *Travancore Economic Journal*, hitherto run by the Board, to a suitable private agency and the recommendations of the Board in regard to this agency are now under the consideration of the Government.

**42. Public Works.** The allotment under Public Works during the current year, though higher than that of 1098, has not reached the level of the two previous years, on account of extraordinary expenses. It has nevertheless been possible to allocate substantial sums to communications and minor irrigation works, the policy being to postpone the construction of costly original buildings to more favourable times. The centre of activity of the department in the matter of communications has properly shifted to the northern taluks of the State, which have not yet been satisfactorily served in that respect. The Chief Engineer also reports that, as a result of the closer scrutiny exercised in the checking of estimates, the present allotments are made to cover larger outturns of work than before. With the construction of the bridge across the Varattar, which is expected to be completed in the course of the current year, the main central road up to Alwaye will have been completely bridged. The works in connection with the provision of a through cartable road between Quilon and Alleppey are making steady progress. Substantial work has also been done on the Shertallai canal. 102 miles of ryots' roads have been taken over by the department for maintenance during the last triennium and a sum of about Rs. 34,000 has been spent up to the end of 1098 on the construction of the necessary masonry works on them, such as bridges and culverts. The rules regulating the construction of these roads having been found to be somewhat inelastic in actual working, the suggestions of the Chief Engineer for their suitable amendment are now under the consideration of the Government. A beginning is being made in the systematic plantation of avenue trees on public roads and a sum of Rs. 2,500 has been allotted for the purpose in the budget of the current year. As fore-shadowed in my Address last year, a committee was appointed to examine the working of the P. W. D. Workshop and to submit suggestions for its improvement, and that committee has, in submitting its report, made recommendations *inter alia* as regards periodical stock-taking, modifying the existing system of accounts, securing better outturn of work and effecting some reduction in the establishment of the Workshop. This report is now under the scrutiny of Government. Government have already directed all departments to indent on the Workshop for their requirements with regard to furniture.

**43.** The passing of the revised rules under the new Public Canals and Public Ferries Regulation has been delayed in the necessary scrutiny to be made by the Chief Engineer, the Additional Head Sirkar Vakil and the Government, and their final issue may be shortly expected. The unfortunate sinking of the motor boat *Redeemer* in Travancore waters, resulting in the untimely death, among others, of Mr. N. Kumaran Asan, the well-known poet and public worker and one of the nominated members to this Session of the Assembly, has pained the Government deeply, and they have appointed a committee composed of officials and non-officials to conduct a searching enquiry into this disaster.

**44. Railways.** The survey for the extension of the Railway from Trivandrum to Nagercoil is making somewhat slow progress, due partly to the difficult nature of the country and partly to the anxiety of Mr. Marini to make the survey quite accurate. The traverse line is reported to have reached the 30th mile on the 1st February current. The sanction of the Government of India has been received for the survey of the line from Kottarakara to the Cochin Harbour and the question of commencing the survey of that line will be considered when the survey of the Trivandrum-Nagercoil line is completed.

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